

REMARKS OF U.S REPRESENTATIVE JOHN E FOGARTY, 2ND CONGRESSIONAL
DISTRICT OF RHODE ISLAND AT 1963 ANNUAL HARVARD SUMMER SCHOOL
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CONFERENCE ON EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION, BAKER HALL ROOM 100
HARVARD UNIVERSITY, FRIDAY, JULY 19, 1963 AT 11:15 AM

First of all let me say that it is a pleasure and a privilege

to be here in the company of such an outstanding group of leading
educators and citizens. The stature of the men and women who
have gathered at this conference is an indication of our growing
awareness as a Nation of the importance of the vital issues of
social and national policy which relate to education.

The particular topic of this conference is the question: "Who
speaks for education in determining public policy?" I welcome
the opportunity to address myself to this question, for as a
United States Congressman for the past 23 years I have often
pondered the same question myself. Every year representatives
from our numerous and varied institutions of higher education,
public and private schools, local, State and Federal educational
agencies, come before our Congressional committees to help us in
our deliberations of national policy. Who is it among all of
these who speaks for education?

Clearly all of them do. It is one of the glories of our diverse
democratic society that this is so. And yet it seems to me from
the vantage point of Congress, that in the final analysis and in
a very special way, which I hope to explain, it is the public as a
whole which really speaks for education in our society. Let me
explain what I mean.

As I look over the history of Federal legislation in education, it becomes increasingly evident that in the decisions of public policy far more than just our educators have spoken for education. The great land-grant college movement of the middle of the last century was in many ways a protest against the prevailing educational leaders of the day. The movement had the elements of a popular revolt against the classical and socially exclusive education of our eastern colleges. The public, feeling slighted by the prevailing system, demanded the establishment of colleges "of the people." And they got them.

A half a century later another movement, which finally led to the passage of the famous Smith-Hughes vocational education act, again extended far beyond the boundaries of the educational world. Among others who led in this movement were industrialists who could see that our educational system was not producing the kinds of skilled workers who were needed for our rapidly expanding industrial system. And the public as a whole became conscious of our national backwardness when we entered the First World War and found ourselves short in necessary manpower.

More recently similar public reaction occurred when Russia sent aloft its first Sputnik. The public woke up to the fact that all was not well in the house of education, and its concern finally led to the passage of the National Defense Education Act. We found again that others than our educators ~~who~~ presumed to speak for education in our Nation.

This is as it ought to be. It is a fundamental of our political system that matters of public policy are by definition "public." Education is one of our most important matters of public policy, and the public does and should presume to speak for education.

If anything it has not involved itself enough. If public opinion as sometimes waited for crises to stir it up and then jumped in with ill-considered and hasty solutions, this does not argue for withdrawal of public concern, but on the contrary for a steadier and more constant public concern in speaking for education.

By emphasizing the place of the public in speaking for education, however, I by no means want to imply that educators do not have a place in speaking for education. Quite the opposite. Educators have an essential role of leadership, as I shall discuss in a moment. But what I do mean to imply is that public opinion in education is an essential element and one that is often underestimated. It may be noted that in each of the examples of national action to which I alluded a moment ago--the land-grant colleges, the vocational education acts, and the National Defense Education Act--it was only when the public finally was aroused that action was taken.

There is a lesson in this for all of us, and it is this: No matter how expertly and eloquently an educator may speak for education and

no matter how good his ideas may be, there is very little chance in our great democracy that anything will come of them unless he has the public behind him and with him. What this means is that if educators are to exercise influence and leadership they must enter the political arena and become a dynamic part of public opinion and the public policy process.

If there was ever a time in our history when we needed this lesson it is today, and it is here that I come to the second theme for my talk this morning. We are once again in an atmosphere of public concern about education. Part of this concern results from the current struggle over civil rights. We are being forced to face up to the discrimination and injustice which we have visited upon our minority citizens, and we are realizing very rapidly the importance of education in this discrimination. The emphasis which the President placed upon education in his civil rights message, for instance, is clear evidence of this. It is almost as if we had never really faced the fact before that only about 40 percent of our non-white young adult population has received a high school education, as opposed to nearly 70 percent of our white young people. In a society where jobs for those without a high school education are increasingly scarce this presents an educational problem of the first magnitude.

In our adult population over 22 percent of our non-white population have not even completed 5 years of school, as opposed to 6 percent in the white group. Only 5.4 percent of our non-white young adults have completed college, which opens the door to the professions and higher opportunities, while nearly 12 percent of the white young adults have done so. We preach equal educational opportunity, but as a Nation we are waking up to the fact of how far we have fallen short in proving this ideal for all of our citizens, and we realize that it is in education above all else that we must seek any real cure to the problem, for without education there is little opportunity.

But the civil rights struggle itself is only part of the problem. What is now emerging into public consciousness is an even deeper and more widespread problem than discrimination against a limited group. The statistics I quoted a moment ago on the 40 percent high school completion rate for non-whites compared to nearly 70 percent for white may be bad enough in revealing inequalities of education, but even aside from the inequality, the fact that nearly a third of all our youth, both white and non-white, are not completing high school is a problem of major proportions in itself. There is the stark question of whether the society is going to be able to use such a large group of youngsters who have not even completed high school. The answer, as best we can tell from our labor statistics, is "No." There will simply not be the employment available for these youngsters and their older counterparts that there used to be.

We are already beginning to feel the effects of this situation. The urgency of the matter is becoming especially apparent in our youthful population. For while our general unemployment rate is between 5 and 6 percent, the unemployment rate of out-of-school teenagers is close to 15 percent. Such a large group of young people both out of school and out of work was aptly called by Mr. Conant "social dynamite."

And the wave of youngsters coming on the labor market without adequate education or training is just beginning. Forty percent more youngsters are expected to enter the labor market during the sixties than did so in the fifties. With the percentage of jobs for the uneducated and unskilled diminishing rapidly every year, the ultimate end of this, unless something is done about it, is disaster.

I cannot but believe that much of the current unrest laid to civil rights is in reality related to the underlying economic problem of unemployment and lack of the necessary training and education needed for opportunity in this country.

I do not pretend that the public at large is as conscious of these worrisome social conditions as it ought to be, for indeed it is not. But I do believe there is a growing awareness of them. Once again there are increasing popular pressures to make the machinery of

public policy do something to solve these problems, and much of what needs to be done is clearly in the field of education. The great question which I wish to put before this group this morning is whether educators, as the official spokesmen for education, will rise to the challenge of leadership presented by this situation. Never before has there been such a need for leadership. The problems that face us are as perplexing as they are serious. By and large we do not know the solutions. Clearly, keeping more young people inside of school buildings for twelve years is not the answer. You and I know that even many of those who do stay in school fail to get the education they need, and those who drop out usually do so after years of negative and fruitless experience in school. I do not blame the educators for this. As a society we have not really made a serious effort to solve this problem.

Perhaps today, when we see the seriousness of the problem, if we devoted as much of our national resources to solving it as we are devoting to reaching the moon, we would come up with solutions. But to do this we need leadership. We need our school people to point out the problems and our university people to help us turn the powerful tools of research to the task of solving them.

And we need this leadership, as I have said, not merely from the isolated world of the schools; we need it in the thick of the

political arena, where public policy is made. For it is only the public that will finally "speak for education" and it is only as leaders of that public that educators will be able to speak effectively for education in determining public policy.

I hope you will forgive me if I end on a note somewhat political even though highly relevant to the present topic. The President has sent to Congress a comprehensive education bill with a number of features specifically designed to deal with the serious social and economic conditions I have just been discussing. He has recently asked for dramatically increased appropriations in his proposals for the revamping of vocational education to meet current and future employment needs, in his manpower training proposals, and in his program to wipe out adult illiteracy. These programs may or may not be the best solutions that could be devised for the serious problems that face us, but I have been dismayed and discouraged, if I may say so, by the lack of concern and leadership in the educational world for these proposals. In some cases I have talked to leading educators who hardly even seem to be aware that the proposals have been made. This is surely not the kind of engagement in the political process that is needed today. If the proposals are wrong, then let us know. If they are right, then help the public to understand them and back them. We desperately need sound public policy to deal with the situation before us, but unless educators will engage themselves in the public policy process we are likely either to do nothing or to do the wrong thing. Educators must not only "speak for education" but help the public and the public's representatives speak for education; otherwise, the job will not be done.